WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.    In an distributed communications network having at least one remote node and one or more local nodes, each local node providing one or more services and at least one local node having a local scheduler, a method for managing upstream communications from the local scheduler, comprising the steps of:

(a) sending a request to transmit data related to a requesting service;

(b) receiving a grant specification from a remote node, said grant specification providing authorization to transmit data related to the requesting service;

(c) considering the needs of a plurality of services, said plurality of services including the requesting service and at least one other service;

(d) scheduling packets for said plurality of services in response to said considering step; and

(e) transmitting a burst based on the scheduled packets to the remote node.

2.    A method of claim 1, further comprising the step of evaluating the current state of queues for each of said plurality of services.

3.    A method of claim 1, further comprising the step of evaluating at least one of throughput and latency to consider the needs of said plurality of services.

4.    A method of claim 1, further comprising the step of drawing data from a higher priority queue prior to drawing data from a lower priority queue to implement said scheduling packets.

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5.    A method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending a piggyback bandwidth request with the burst.

6.    A method of claim 5, further comprising the step of appending said piggyback bandwidth request to the burst.

7.    A method of claim 6, further comprising the step of appending said piggyback bandwidth request to a voice packet.

8.    A method of claim 5, further comprising the step of sending said piggyback bandwidth request as a message.

9.    A method of claim 5, further comprising the step of sending said piggyback bandwidth request in a header frame.

10.    A method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending multiple piggyback bandwidth requests with the burst.